

Message Text

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67

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 MC-02

ACDA-10 IO-11 EB-07 AID-05 /102 W

----- 006408

R 101501Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 107

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 0993

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOGA N U

SUBJ: HIGHLIGHTS OF PRIME MINISTER'S ADDRESS TO THE KNESSET

1. PRIME MINISTER RABIN ADDRESSED KNESSET SESSION ON FEB 9 TO DEFEND HIMSELF AGAINST THE LIKUD NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION OVER HIS REMARKS IN THE U.S. CRITICIZING ISRAELI ARMS PROCUREMENT LIST. HE BEGAN BY PRAISING THE U.S. FOR ITS STAND ON THE PLO ISSUE AND PARTICULARLY ITS VETO OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL'S LATEST PRO-PLO RESOLUTION. HE FURTHER STRESSED THAT ISRAEL AND THE U.S. HAD AGREED ON BOTH "DIRECTIONS AND TARGETS CONCERNING THE EXAMINATION OF ALL POSSIBILITIES FOR THE RENEWAL OF PEACE NEGOTIATIONS " -- AND HOW FAR ISRAEL COULD GO TOWARD ATTAINING ITS PEACE GOALS. THANKS TO THE REALISTIC AND SOBER APPROACH OF THE USG THERE HAD BEEN NO NEED AT THIS TIME TO DECIDE ON A SPECIFIC COURSE OF ACTION TO BE TAKEN.

2. RABIN CONTINUED THAT AS A RESULT OF HIS MEETINGS AND DISCUSSIONS IN THE U.S. THE MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN HE TWO COUNTRIES REGARDING THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE HAD BEEN STRENGTHENED. "THE LEADERS OF THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION REITERATED TO ME THEIR INTEREST IN EXPLORING A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF PEACE WITH JORDAN RATHER THAN IN SEEKING NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE PLO ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW PALESTINIAN STATE..."

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3. TURNING TO THE ARMS PROCUREMENT ISSUE, THE PM SAID THAT HE

HAD ONCE AGAIN RECEIVED A POSITIVE REPLY REGARDING A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF IMPORTANT ARMAMENT ITEMS TO BE SUPPLIED TO THE IDF, IN ACCORDANCE WITH A PART OR SECTION OF "OUR ARMS PROCUREMENT LIST".

4. DIGRESSING FROM HIS WRITTEN TEXT THE PM PRAISED THE U.S. FOR ITS ARMS AID TO ISRAEL AFTER THE YOM KIPPUR WAT, WHEN IT HAD DIVERTED WEAPONS FROM ITS OWN EMERGENCY RESERVES AND EVEN FROM U.S. ARMY UNITS. COMMENTING ON FINANCIAL AID, RABIN EXPRESSED HIS BELIEF THAT THE UNDERSTANDING IN THE U.S. OF ISRAEL'S NEEDS WILL FIND EXPRESSION IN CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL OF THE FINANCIAL AID REQUESTS FOR ISRAEL SUBMITTED BY THE PRESIDENT.

5. TURNING TO THE ISSUE OF THE CONTROVERSIAL ARMS PROCUREMENT LISTS, THE PM REPEATED HIS EXPLANATION THAT THE ORIGINAL LISTS SUBMITTED TO THE U.S. HAD TO UNDERGO CONSIDERABLE CHANGES. THERE WERE SEVERAL REASONS WHY LISTS HAD TO BE MODIFIED, SUCH AS THE RISE IN THE COST OF EQUIPMENT AND CHANGES IN BUDGET PRIORITIES. MOREOVER, "IN THE COURSE OF SOBER EVALUATION IT HAD HAD BECOME CLEAR TO US THAT THE CONTENT OF THE ORIGINAL LIST NO LONGER FITTED THE FRAMEWORK OF THE NEW SITUATION". RABIN ALSO MENTIONED THAT U.S. OPPOSITION TO THE SUPPLY OF CERTAIN ESSENTIAL ITEMS HAD REQUIRED ADJUSTMENTS.

6. RABIN REPEATED THAT BOTH THE ORIGINAL AND THE AMENDED LIST SUBMITTED TO U.S. ADMINISTRATION HAD RECEIVED HIS PERSONAL APPROVAL. HE THEN CONCLUDED HIS EXPLANATION BY DENYING ANY INTENTION ON HIS PART TO SINGLE OUT THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE OR THE DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT FOR CRITICISM. "ANYBODY ATTRIBUTING TO ME AN INTENTION WHICH I DID NOT HAVE IS BOTH WRONG AND MISLEADING. ANY IMPRESSION THAT I HAD CRITIZED THE DEFENSE MINISTER AND THE DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT IS TO BE REGRETTEED, BUT THIS WAS DEFINITELY NOT MY INTENTION".
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SPEECHES, LIBERATION FRONTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976TELAV00993
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760051-0091
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760262/aaaacmn.tel
Line Count: 95
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17 JUN 2004 by oatisao>; APPROVED <21 DEC 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HIGHLIGHTS OF PRIME MINISTER'S ADDRESS TO THE KNESSET
TAGS: PFOR, US, IS, XF, PLO, UNGA, (RABIN, YITZHAK)
To: STATE
JERUSALEM
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006